

## COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SAFETY

BILL TITLE: The Positive School Climate and School Safety Bill

A BILL to ensure that all students attend schools that provide the positive school climate and supports needed to be safe, healthy and successful learners.

### SEC. 1: FINDINGS

The (general assembly/state legislature) finds that:

- (a) Students have the right to attend a safe school free from bullying, discrimination, harassment, aggression, violence, and abuse with trained staff who promote a positive learning environment for all.
- (b) School personnel have the right to work in a safe environment and should be provided training, resources, and support to help maintain safe and supportive school environments for students.
- (c) School climate profoundly influences students' social, emotional, and academic functioning and is an important indicator of student and school success.
- (d) School climate is the extent to which a school community creates and maintains a safe school campus; a supportive academic, disciplinary, and physical environment; and respectful, trusting, and caring relationships throughout the school community.
- (e) Comprehensive, effective, culturally competent and evidence-based initiatives to strengthen, promote and enhance school climates, ensure school safety and crisis response are most effective when designed, implemented and evaluated by a multi-disciplinary team of school professionals.
- (f) Positive approaches to discipline in a positive school climate are essential to the success of students.
- (g) Comprehensive school safety efforts must balance physical and psychological safety.
- (h) Physical security measures are most effective when they are not overly restrictive and combine reasonable physical security measures with efforts to enhance school climate, build trusting relationships, and encourage students and adults to report potential threats.
- (i) Schools require resources to design and implement a comprehensive, effective, culturally competent and evidence-based school safety and crisis response plans to ensure a positive school climate and to keep their schools safe.

[CITE SECTION OF XX STATE LAW] is amended to include the following:

### SEC. 2: PURPOSES [CHOOSE ONE OPTION]

#### OPTION 1

The purpose of this Act is to—

Ensure schools develop comprehensive, effective culturally competent and evidence-based school safety and crisis response plans that are designed, implemented, and evaluated by a multi-disciplinary team of school professionals who work together to foster and support a positive school climate.

**OPTION 2**

The purposes of this Act are to—

- (a) Ensure schools develop comprehensive, effective, culturally competent and evidence-based school safety and crisis response plans that are designed, implemented, and evaluated by a multi-disciplinary team of school professionals to include:
  3. Evidence-based protocols and processes for suicide risk assessment.
  4. Evidence-based protocols and processes for threat assessment and management.
  5. Training and ongoing professional development in evidence-based school safety and crisis preparedness and response for school safety and crisis teams and other relevant school staff.
  6. Comprehensive school mental and behavioral health systems that encompass wellness prevention, early identification, and early intervention, and utilize evidence-based targeted intervention and support for students at risk.
- (b) Ensure the State
  3. Allocates resources to districts sufficient to support each school developing a school safety and crisis response plan unique to their school community;
  4. Provides technical assistance to districts; and
  5. Reports on a bi-annual basis the progress of all schools in developing a school safety and crisis response plan.

**SEC. 3: MINIMUM STANDARDS**

- (a) REGULATIONS.—

IN GENERAL.—Not later than [# OF DAYS] after the date of enactment of this Act, the State [STATE ENTITY e.g. Department of Board of Education, School Climate or Safety Committee etc.] shall:

1. Promulgate regulations consistent with Section 3(I)(3)(1) to:
  - A. Establish minimum standards to ensure each school develops a comprehensive, culturally responsive, and evidence-based school climate and school safety plan designed, implemented, and evaluated by a multi-disciplinary team of school professionals.
  - B. Establish a Safe School Information and Best Practices Clearinghouse of up-to-date, evidence-based, and data-driven information on effective strategies for school safety and crisis preparedness; making these resources available to districts and schools so that ongoing professional development is available for school safety and crisis teams and other relevant school staff.

- C. Develop a State mechanism to effectively monitor and ensure that each school has met the minimum standards as defined in (C). [STATE FLEX IN ASSIGNING THIS FUNCTION]
- D. Report on a bi-annual basis the progress of all schools in developing a school safety and crisis response plan.

(b) FUNDING.—

1. The [STATE ENTITY] is provided [FUNDING LEVEL] to allocate to districts funding sufficient to meet the requirements of 3(1). [FURTHER LANGUAGE MAY BE NEEDED TO DETERMINE OR UTILIZE AN EXISTING FORMULA/ALLOCATION PROCESS FOR SCHOOLS IN THE STATE.]
2. Districts and schools shall be allowed to blend State, district, and local health, mental health, and education funding consistent with all applicable laws.
3. The State shall ensure that no more than 2 percent of funds authorized by this act shall be used to purchase physical security equipment.

(c) REQUIREMENTS.—

1. No later than [XXX days] after the date of enactment of this act, each school shall:
  - A. Convene a multi-disciplinary team of school professionals to develop a comprehensive, culturally competent, and evidence-based school safety and crisis response plan that promotes student well-being and learning, ensures the safety of both students and school personnel, and also includes:
    - i. Evidence-based protocols and processes for suicide risk assessment.
    - ii. Evidence-based protocols and processes for threat assessment and management.
    - iii. Effective security measures that are not overly restrictive and combine reasonable physical security measures with efforts to enhance psychological safety, improve school climate, build trusting relationships, and encourage students and adults to report potential threats.
    - iv. Evidence-based practices that promote a safe and supportive learning environment free from bullying, discrimination, harassment, aggression, violence, and abuse.
    - v. School teams designated as:
      - 1) school safety crisis and response team;
      - 2) threat assessment team;

Each school may determine if the multi-disciplinary team is sufficient to meet the needs of this subsection.

- B. Develop a plan to provide training and ongoing professional development for all teams described in (a) and other relevant school staff and students as necessary on:
    - i. Positive discipline practices that utilize evidence-based practices and operate within a multi-tier system of supports (MTSS) framework that encompasses universal prevention and skills building, early identification and intervention, and targeted supports for students at risk.
    - ii. Preventive and responsive crisis services provided within a trauma informed multi-tiered system of support that ensures collaboration among families, schools, and communities.
    - iii. How to report concerns and appropriately determine level of threat as outlined by the protocols and processes for threat assessment and management by the designated team.
  - C. Be provided access to State and district technical assistance consistent with the requirements of this Act and all other applicable laws.
    - i. State and district technical assistance must be:
      - 1) Evidence-based, and
      - 2) Provided by qualified school-employed mental health professionals, relevant specialized instructional support personnel, school resource officers, as appropriate, or others with significant expertise needed to help schools meet the requirements in this act.
  - D. Comply with State reporting requirements.
2. Each school may also:
- A. Implement a comprehensive school mental and behavioral health system that encompasses wellness, prevention, early identification, and early intervention, and utilizes evidence-based targeted intervention and support for students at risk.
  - B. Develop a plan to recruit, hire, and train more school employed mental health professionals (e.g. school psychologists, school counselors, and school social workers) to support student learning, mental health, and behavior.
  - C. Amend, revise, or update an existing school safety or crisis response plan to meet the requirements of Section 3(I)(1) to foster and support a positive school climate.
  - D. Work in collaboration with a district or with the State to meet the requirements of Section 3(I)(1).
3. The State shall ensure an adequate level of school-employed mental health professional staff, including school psychologists are available to schools across the State to implement the requirements of this subsection.

PROHIBITION: For purposes of carrying out the requirements under Section 3 (I)(1), possession of a firearm should be limited only to commissioned and trained school resource officers employed by the school.

PROHIBITION: For purposes of carrying out this act, school resource officers shall have no role in the development, implementation, or enforcement of school discipline policies and practices.

(d) **ACCOUNTABILITY.** —Not later than the beginning of each fiscal year after the date of enactment of this Act, the State shall verify whether schools are in compliance with Section 3(I)(1). For any school not meeting the requirements, the district is required to provide technical assistance to ensure school compliance within 90 days.

(e) **DEFINITIONS.**—

In this Act:

1. **Evidence-based.** -The term “evidence-based” means an activity, strategy, or intervention that—
  - A. Demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on—
    - i. Strong evidence from at least 1 well-designed and well-implemented experimental study;
    - ii. Moderate evidence from at least 1 well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study; or
    - iii. Promising evidence from at least 1 well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias; or
  - B. Demonstrates a rationale based on high quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes; and
  - C. Includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention.
2. **Multi-disciplinary team.** —The term “multi-disciplinary team” is a team of school professionals, including school administrators, school-employed mental health professionals (e.g., school psychologists, school social workers and school counselors), general and special educators, and other relevant educators.
3. **Multi-tier system of supports.**—The term “multi-tier system of supports” means a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based, systemic practices to support a rapid response to students’ needs, with regular observation to facilitate databased instructional decision making.
4. **Positive Discipline.** —The term “positive discipline” means a system for discipline that teaches and reinforces that positive behaviors are
  - A. Clear and equitably applied to all students;

- B. Employ culturally competent practices;
  - C. Safeguard the well-being of all students and staff;
  - D. Keep students in school and out of the juvenile justice system
  - E. Incorporate family involvement;
  - F. Focus on fair and consistent discipline practices that utilize:
    - i. Positive behavioral interventions and supports (e.g., PBIS);
    - ii. Social and emotional development;
    - iii. Restorative justice interventions; and
  - G. Operate within a multitiered system of supports (MTSS) framework that encompasses universal prevention and skills building, early identification and intervention, and targeted supports for learning and behavioral concerns.
5. **School employed mental health professional**—The term ‘school employed mental health professional’ means a state licensed or state certified school counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker employed by a school district and qualified to provide school based mental health services.
6. **School Resource Officer**—The term “school resource officer” is a carefully selected and specially trained career law enforcement officer with sworn authority who is deployed by an employing police department or agency in a community-oriented policing assignment to work in collaboration with one or more schools.
7. **School safety crisis and response plan**—The term “school safety crisis and response plan” means a comprehensive plan for each local school that is culturally responsive, supports a positive school climate, and utilizes evidence-based practices and addresses mitigation of, preparedness for, response to, and recovery from emergencies, including:
- A. violent or traumatic events on school grounds during regular school hours or during school, sponsored activities, and,
  - B. events in the community that affect school operations.
8. **School safety crisis and response team**. The term “school safety crisis and response team” means a multi-disciplinary team comprised of school administrators, school-employed mental health professionals, specialized instructional support personnel, teachers, paraprofessionals, and school security personnel. This team’s responsibilities include:
- A. Facilitating development and implementation of school safety and crisis response plan;
  - B. Providing professional development and consultation on systemic and student level safety issues;

- C. Facilitate implementation of policies and practices that foster a safe and supportive school environment;
  - D. Provide professional development, support, and coaching to school staff regarding prevention and safety initiatives;
  - E. Providing consultation or direct response in the event of a crisis or other emergency;
  - F. Monitor implementation of all school safety efforts.
9. **Threat assessment.**—The term “threat assessment” means a system utilizing a violence prevention strategy that involves:
- A. identifying student threats to commit a violent act,
  - B. determining the seriousness of the threat, and
  - C. developing intervention plans that protect potential victims and address the underlying problem or conflict that stimulated the threatening behavior
  - D. efforts to avoid and inappropriate arrest of students whose behavior does not have clear criminal implications
10. **Threat assessment team.**—The term ‘threat assessment team’ means a properly trained multi-disciplinary school team comprised of administrators, school employed mental health professionals, school resource officers, and other relevant and trained staff and/or community members as needed which:
- A. Is responsible for identifying and assessing individuals whose behavior indicates violence or physical bodily harm to self or others;
  - B. Develops and facilitates implementation of evidence-based interventions to mitigate the threat of harm to self or others posed by an individual and addresses the mental and behavioral health needs of such individuals to reduce such threat; and
  - C. Provides information to students and school employees on recognizing harmful, threatening, or violent behavior that may pose a threat to the community, the school, or an individual.